

Pres. Gerald R. Ford's Meetings and Activities for April 28, 1975:

Among other events on that day, the President spoke to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on regulatory reform, ordered the evacuation of the last Americans from South Vietnam, and posed for photographs with the 1974-75 Miss National Teenager.



6:50 am - The President had breakfast.

7:34 am - The President went to the Oval Office.

7:45 - 7:57 am - The President met with:

- David A. Peterson, Chief, Central Intelligence Agency
- White House Support Staff
- Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs

8:00 - 8:35 am - The President met with his Counselor, Robert T. Hartmann. (Note: The president's counselor is the most important assistant to the president and oversees the Communications, Media Affairs, Speechwriting, and Press Offices.)

8:35 - 9:02 am - The President met with his Assistant, Donald H. Rumsfeld. (Anybody recognize that name? Hint: Rumsfeld was also in Bush's administration.)

10:13 - 10:16 am - The President arrived at the 63rd Annual meeting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (Note: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions.)

10:23 - 10:40 am - The President addressed approximately 3,000 members of affiliated Chambers of Commerce attending the meeting. Excerpt from the speech:

It is like a spring tonic to appear before a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, and I thank you most generously for your warm welcome. Individually as well as collectively, you have always presented such an upbeat, positive approach to America that it really feels good to be with you this morning.



Believe me, we need that kind of vitality, that zest for problem solving, and that absence of cynicism that so typifies T, our membership. Let me also congratulate you on the relevance of your theme for this meeting: "America's Future--Our Critical Choices."

As leaders of business, industry, government, we join together to explore the future, so that we may seize the opportunities and be better able to cope with the problems that we face in common. The mutuality of our problems was never more clearly stated than when I was introduced at a business conference quite recently.

[Photo left: Ford giving his speech to the Chamber of Commerce.]

10:57 am - The President returned to the Oval Office.

11:00 - 11:40 am - The President met with:

- Mr. Hartmann (President's Counselor)
- John O. Marsh (Jr., Counselor)
- Donald Rumsfeld (Assistant to the President)
- Max L. Friedersdorf, (Assistant for Legislative Affairs)
- Ronald H. Nessen, (Press Secretary)

11:43 - 12:45 pm - The President met with Henry A. Kissinger (Secretary of State – responsible for foreign policy).

1:05 - 1:20 pm - The President met to discuss federal aid to parochial (religious) schools with:

- Monsignor Herman H. Zerfas, Superintendent of Education, Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Ival E. Zylstra, Administrator, School and Governmental Relations, National Union of Christian Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- James M. Cannon III, Executive Director of the Domestic Council and Assistant for Domestic Affairs

[Meeting pictured at right.]



2:03 - 2:26 pm - The President met with Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Caspar W. Weinberger.

2:30 - 3:16 pm - The President met with: Mr. Rumsfeld (Assistant) and Richard B. Cheney (Deputy Assistant, who also goes by the nickname Dick – recognize the name?)

5:20 - 5:25 pm - The President met with:

- Congressman Richard Kelly (R-Florida)
- Lisa Lyon, 1974-75 Miss National Teenager
- Mrs. E.G. Shaeffer, Miss National Teenager Pageant Director
- Charles Leppert, Jr., Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs

[Pictured at right.]

5:26 - 5:27 pm - The President talked with Secretary Kissinger.
[phone call received]

5:27 - 5:43 pm - The President met with:

- William T. Coleman, Jr., Secretary of Transportation
- Richard Cheney
- William N. Walker, Director of the Presidential Personnel Office and Deputy Special Representative-designate for Trade Negotiations



5:47 - 7:12 pm - The President attended a meeting to discuss the economy and energy.

7:12 - 7:23 pm - The President meets in the Oval Office with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller to discuss the American evacuation of Saigon, Vietnam.
[Photo at left.]

7:23 - 8:08 pm - The President participated in a National Security Council (NSC) meeting. Excerpt from *A Time To Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford*,



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The final siege of Saigon began on April 25. Kissinger was on the telephone to U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin several times a day, and his reports convinced me that the country was going to collapse momentarily. In the late afternoon of April 28, I was chairing a meeting of my economic and energy advisers in the Cabinet Room when Brent Scowcroft entered and handed me a note. A message had just come in to the Situation Room downstairs. Our Air Force, it said, had been forced to halt evacuation flights from Saigon because Communist rockets and artillery shells were blasting the runways at Tan Son Nhut. A C-130 transport plane had been destroyed and several U.S. Marines killed. Nearly a thousand Americans still remained in Saigon, and we had to carry out our plans to evacuate them.

Leaving the Cabinet Room, I stepped into the Oval Office and discussed the crisis with Kissinger and Rockefeller. Then I convened a meeting of the NSC in the Roosevelt Room. It was 7:30 P.M. in Washington, almost dawn in Saigon.



[Photo at right.]

8:08pm - The President returned to the Oval Office.

8:30-8:43pm - The President met with: Secretary Kissinger, then Lt. Gen. Scowcroft, then talked with Mr. Rumsfeld. [phone call received]

9:15pm - The President and the First Lady had dinner.



10:24-10:32pm - President Gerald R. Ford takes a final phone call from Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, bringing him up to date on the situation in Vietnam, following a nighttime meeting in the West Sitting Room with the Secretary and Deputy National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

[Photo at left.]

11:28pm - The President returned to the Oval Office.

11:31pm - The President went to the Situation Room.

11:31 pm - Situation Room. Excerpt from *A Time To Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford*:

I decided to wait an hour or so to see if the shelling stopped. If it did, we could resume the evacuation flights. The firing did cease, but we had a new problem to solve. Refugees were streaming out onto the airport's runways, and our planes couldn't land. The situation there was clearly out of control. The only option left was to remove the remaining Americans, and as many South Vietnamese as possible, by helicopter from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Choppers were standing by on the decks of U.S. Navy ships steaming off the coast, and just before midnight I ordered the final evacuation. Over the next sixteen hours we managed to rescue 6,500 U.S. and South Vietnamese personnel without sustaining significant casualties.

12:05am - The President returned to the second floor Residence. The President makes a late night telephone call in the second floor residence at the White House as the First Lady watches.

[Photo at right.]

